



Assembly Committee on Veterans Affairs Newsletter

June- July 2011



Colonel Cook's Corner

My name is Paul Cook and I am the Chair of the Committee on Veterans Affairs. Since becoming an Assemblymember, I have always made it one of my top priorities to work on behalf of our veterans. My position as Chair of the Assembly Veterans Committee puts me in the ideal place to repay the sacrifices that veterans have given to protect all of us. Following the Assembly's plan for transparency, this quarterly newsletter will highlight events, issues, and bills that the Assembly is diligently working on relating to veterans. As Republicans and Democrats, we believe helping veterans is a non-partisan issue. We will continue to do our best making sure veteran's needs are met.

Sincerely,

PAUL COOK
Chair
Assembly Committee
on Veterans Affairs

June 2011 Veterans Luncheon

On June 22, 2011, Assemblymember Cook joined several other Assemblymembers in honoring California Veterans at the 4th Annual Veterans Recognition Luncheon celebration at the Sacramento Convention Center. The Veterans Recognition Luncheon is an opportunity for members of the State Assembly to honor a veteran residing in his or her district who has significantly contributed to their community. Each designee was honored, recognized, and presented with a certificate on the Assembly floor.



Featured Veteran

65th District- Veteran of the Year



Dick Riddell enlisted in the United States Navy at the age of 17, shortly after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. During the war, he served in the Naval Armed Guard aboard cargo ships and tankers in the Pacific War Theatre and in the Atlantic Theatre. He sailed on more than 15 ships traveling in excess of 200,000 miles. After the Japanese surrendered, he served in the occupation forces in Japan for several months before being discharged.

AB 167- Stolen Valor Act

AB 167 signed by Governor Jerry Brown on July 8, 2011, will force elected officials to forfeit office if they are convicted under the California Stolen Valor Act.

Under current state law, an elected official must be convicted of the federal Stolen Valor Act in order to be forced to vacate office. The federal Stolen Valor Act states that it is illegal for a person to make a false claim of a military decoration. Unfortunately, the federal law has been challenged in court due to First Amendment issues. This is due to the fact that the federal law does not include an "intent to defraud" provision; the California Stolen Valor Act contains such a provision. AB 167 was sponsored by Vietnam Veterans of America and Student Veterans of California, and received support from the American Legion, AMVETS, Military Officers Association of America, and the California Association of CVSO's. The bill passed both the Senate and the Assembly with unanimous support.